Jenny Lind

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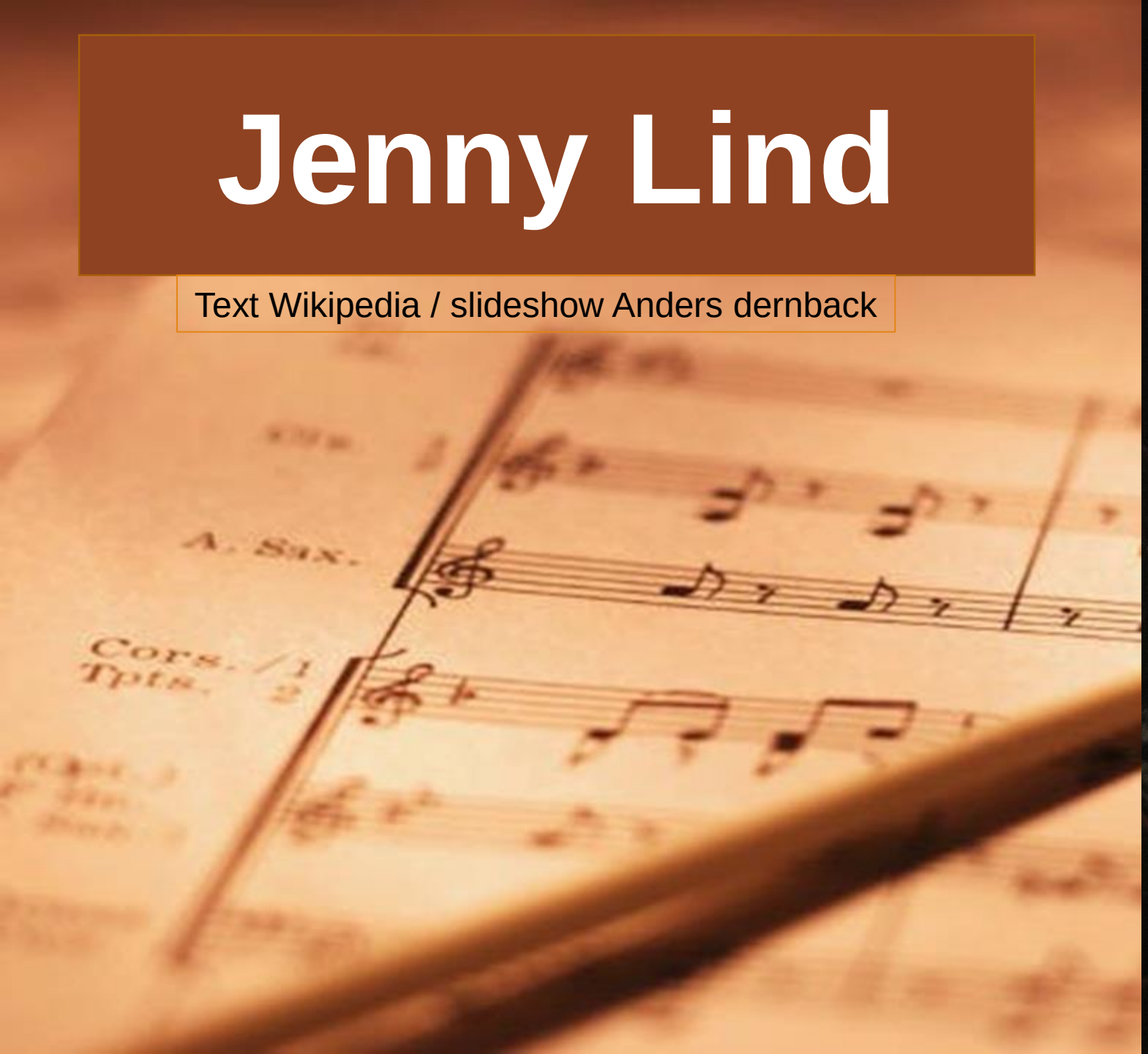


Johanna Maria "Jenny" Lind (6 October 1820 – 2 November 1887) was a Swedish opera singer, often called the "Swedish Nightingale". One of the most highly regarded singers of the 19th century, she performed in soprano roles in opera in Sweden and across Europe, and undertook an extraordinarily popular concert tour of the United States beginning in 1850. She was a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music from 1840.

Lind became famous after her performance in Der Freischütz in Sweden in 1838. Within a few years, she had suffered vocal damage, but the singing teacher Manuel García saved her voice. She was in great demand in opera roles throughout Sweden and northern Europe during the 1840s, and was closely associated with Felix Mendelssohn. After two acclaimed seasons in London, she announced her retirement from opera at the age of 29.

In 1850, Lind went to America at the invitation of the showman **P. T. Barnum**. She gave 93 large-scale concerts for him and then continued to tour under her own management. She earned more than $350,000 from these concerts, donating the proceeds to charities, principally the endowment of free schools in Sweden. With her new husband, Otto Goldschmidt, she returned to **Europe in 1852** where she had three children and gave occasional concerts over the next two decades, settling in **England in 1855**. From **1882**, for some years, she was a **professor of singing at the Royal College of Music in London.**

The Royal Dramatic Theatre (Swedish: Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern, colloquially Dramaten) is Sweden's national stage for "spoken drama", founded in 1788. Around one thousand shows are put on annually on the theatre's eight running stages.

Born in Klara in central Stockholm, Sweden, Lind was the illegitimate daughter of Niclas Jonas Lind (1798–1858), a bookkeeper, and Anne-Marie Fellborg (1793–1856), a schoolteacher. Lind's mother had divorced her first husband for adultery but refused to remarry until after his death in 1834. Lind's parents married when she was 14.

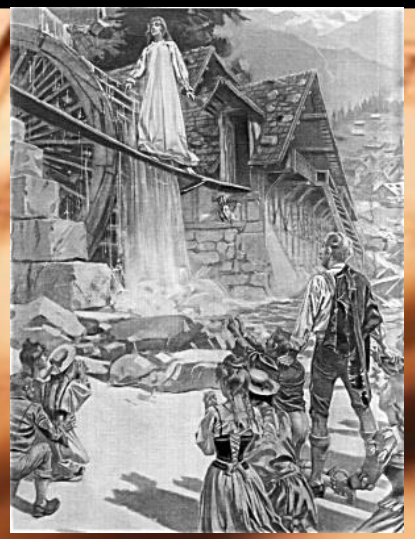
Lind's mother ran a day school for girls out of her home. When Lind was about 9, her singing was overheard by the maid of Mademoiselle Lundberg, the principal dancer at the Royal Swedish Opera. The maid, astounded by Lind's extraordinary voice, returned the next day with Lundberg, who arranged an audition and helped her gain admission to the acting school of the Royal Dramatic Theatre, where she studied with Carl Magnus Craelius, the singing master at the theatre.

Lind began to sing onstage when she was 10. She had a vocal crisis at the age of 12 and had to stop singing for a time, but she recovered. Her first great role was Agathe in Weber's Der Freischütz in 1838 at the Royal Swedish Opera. At 20, she was a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music and court singer to the King of Sweden and Norway. Her voice became seriously damaged by overuse and untrained singing technique, but her career was saved by the singing teacher Manuel García with whom she studied in Paris from 1841 to 1843. He insisted that she should not sing at all for three months, to allow her vocal cords to recover, before he started to teach her a healthy and secure vocal technique.

After Lind had been with García for a year, the composer **Giacomo Meyerbeer**, an early and faithful admirer of her talent, arranged an audition for her at the Opéra in Paris, but she was rejected. The biographer Francis Rogers concludes that Lind strongly resented the rebuff: when she became an international star, she always refused invitations to sing at the **Paris Opéra.** Lind returned to the **Royal Swedish Opera**, greatly improved as a singer by García's training.

She toured Denmark where, in **1843,** Hans Christian Andersen met and fell in love with her. Although the two became good friends, she did not reciprocate his romantic feelings. She is believed to have inspired three of his fairy tales: "Beneath the Pillar", "The Angel" and "The Nightingale". He wrote, "No book or personality whatever has exerted a more ennobling influence on me, as a poet, than Jenny Lind. For me she opened the sanctuary of art. The biographer Carol Rosen believes that after Lind rejected Andersen as a suitor, he portrayed her as The Snow Queen with a heart of ice.

La sonnambula (The Sleepwalker) is an opera semiseria in two acts, with music in the bel canto tradition by Vincenzo Bellini set to an Italian libretto by Felice Romani, based on a scenario for a ballet-pantomime written by Eugène Scribe and choreographed by Jean-Pierre Aumer called La somnambule, ou L'arrivée d'un nouveau seigneur. The ballet had premiered in Paris in September 1827 at the height of a fashion for stage works incorporating somnambulism.



German and British success

In December 1844, through Meyerbeer's influence, Lind was engaged to sing the title role in Bellini's opera Norma in Berlin.[3] That led to more engagements in opera houses throughout Germany and Austria, but such was her success in Berlin that she continued there for four months before she left for other cities. Among her admirers were Robert Schumann, Hector Berlioz and, most importantly for her, Felix Mendelssohn. Ignaz Moscheles wrote: "Jenny Lind has fairly enchanted me... her song with two concertante flutes is perhaps the most incredible feat in the way of bravura singing that can possibly be heard"

That number, from Meyerbeer's Ein Feldlager in Schlesien (The Camp of Silesia, 1844, a role written for Lind but not premiered by her) became one of the songs most associated with Lind, and she was called on to sing it wherever she performed in concert. Her operatic repertoire comprised the title roles in Lucia di Lammermoor, Maria di Rohan, Norma, La sonnambula and La vestale as well as Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro, Adina in L'elisir d'amore and Alice in Robert le diable. About that time, she became known as "the Swedish Nightingale". In December 1845, the day after her debut at the Leipzig Gewandhaus under the baton of Mendelssohn, she sang without fee for a charity concert in aid of the Orchestra Widows' Fund. Her devotion and generosity to charitable causes remained a key aspect of her career and greatly enhanced her international popularity even among the unmusical.

At the Royal Swedish Opera, Lind had been friends with the tenor Julius Günther. They sang together both in opera and on the concert stage and became romantically linked by 1844. Their schedules separated them, however, as Günther remained in Stockholm and then became a student of Garcia's in Paris in 1846–1847. After reuniting in Sweden, according to Lind's 1891 Memoir, they became engaged to marry in the spring of 1848, just before Lind returned to England. However, the two broke off the engagement in October of the same year.

After a successful season in Vienna, where she was mobbed by admirers and feted by the Imperial Family, Lind traveled to London and gave her first performance there on 4 May 1847, when she appeared in an Italian version of Meyerbeer's Robert le diable. It was attended by Queen Victoria

In July 1847, she starred in the world première of Verdi's opera I masnadieri at Her Majesty's Theatre, under the baton of the composer.[8] During her two years on the operatic stage in London, Lind appeared in most of the standard opera repertory.[3] In early 1849, still in her twenties, Lind announced her permanent retirement from opera. Her last opera performance was on 10 May 1849 in Robert le diable; Queen Victoria and other members of the Royal Family were present. Lind's biographer Francis Rogers wrote, "The reasons for her early retirement have been much discussed for nearly a century, but remain today a matter of mystery. Many possible explanations have been advanced, but not one of them has been verified"

Lind and Mendelssohn

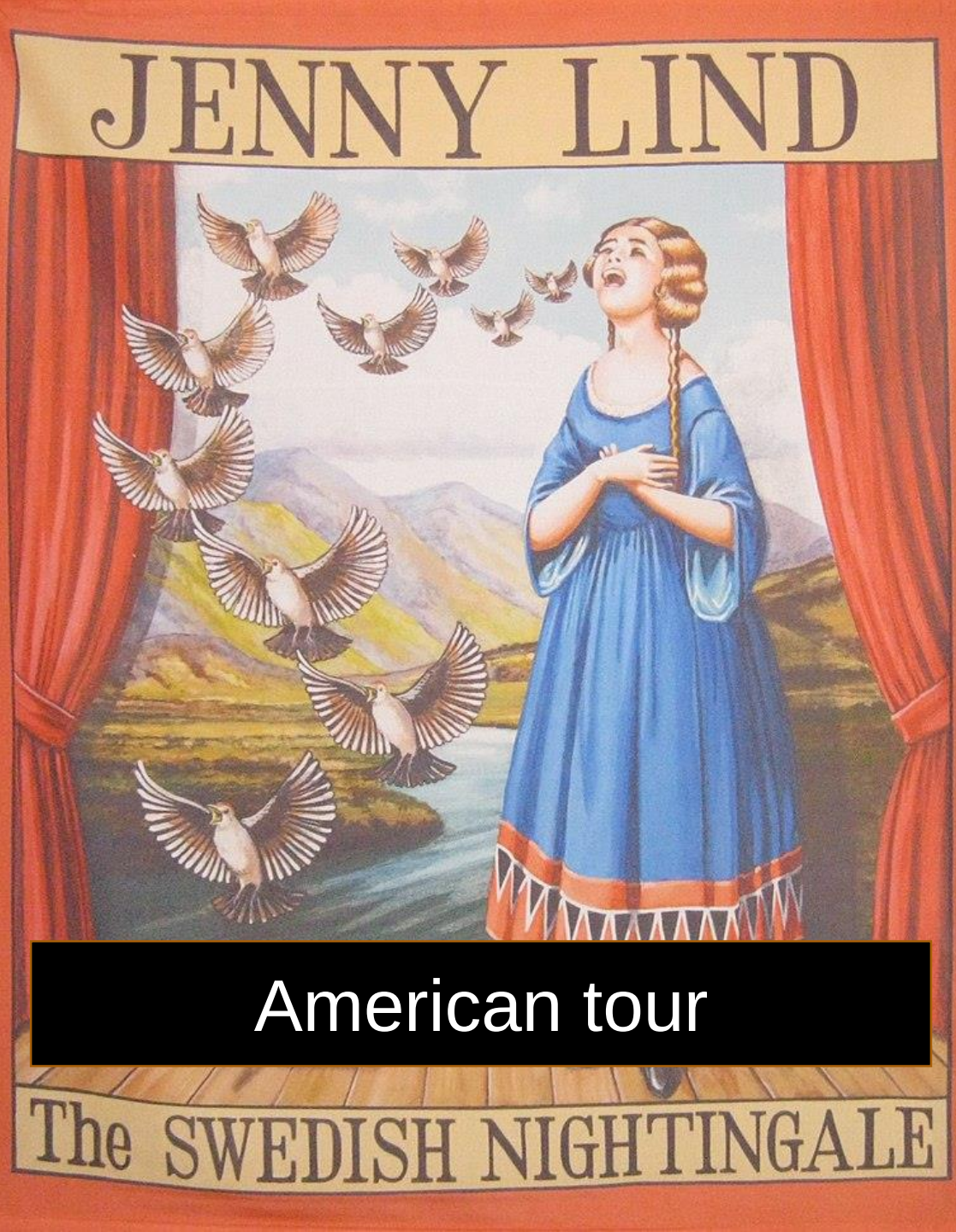
In London, Lind's close friendship with Mendelssohn continued. There had been claims that their relationship was more than friendship. In 2013, George Biddlecombe confirmed in the Journal of the Royal Musical Association that "The Committee of the Mendelssohn Scholarship Foundation possesses material indicating that Mendelssohn wrote passionate love letters to Lind entreating her to join him in an adulterous relationship and threatening suicide as a means of exerting pressure upon her, and that these letters were destroyed on being discovered after her death"

Mendelssohn was present at Lind's London debut in Robert le diable, and his friend, the critic Henry Chorley, who was with him, wrote: "I see as I write the smile with which Mendelssohn, whose enjoyment of Mdlle. Lind's talent was unlimited, turned round and looked at me, as if a load of anxiety had been taken off his mind. His attachment to Mademoiselle Lind's genius as a singer was unbounded, as was his desire for her success. Mendelssohn worked with Lind on many occasions and wrote the beginnings of an opera, Lorelei, for her, based on the legend of the Lorelei Rhine maidens; the opera was unfinished at his death. He included a high F-sharp in his oratorio Elijah ("Hear Ye Israel") with Lind's voice in mind.

Four months after her London debut, she was devastated by the premature death of Mendelssohn in November 1847. She did not at first feel able to sing the soprano part in Elijah, which he had written for her. She finally did so at a performance in London's Exeter Hall in late 1848, which raised £1,000 to fund a musical scholarship as a memorial to him; it was her first appearance in oratorio. The original intention had been to found a school of music in Mendelssohn's name in Leipzig, but there was not enough support in Leipzig, and with the help of Sir George Smart, Julius Benedict and others, Lind eventually raised enough money to fund a scholarship "to receive pupils of all nations and promote their musical training". The first recipient of the Mendelssohn Scholarship was the 14-year-old Arthur Sullivan, whom Lind encouraged in his career.

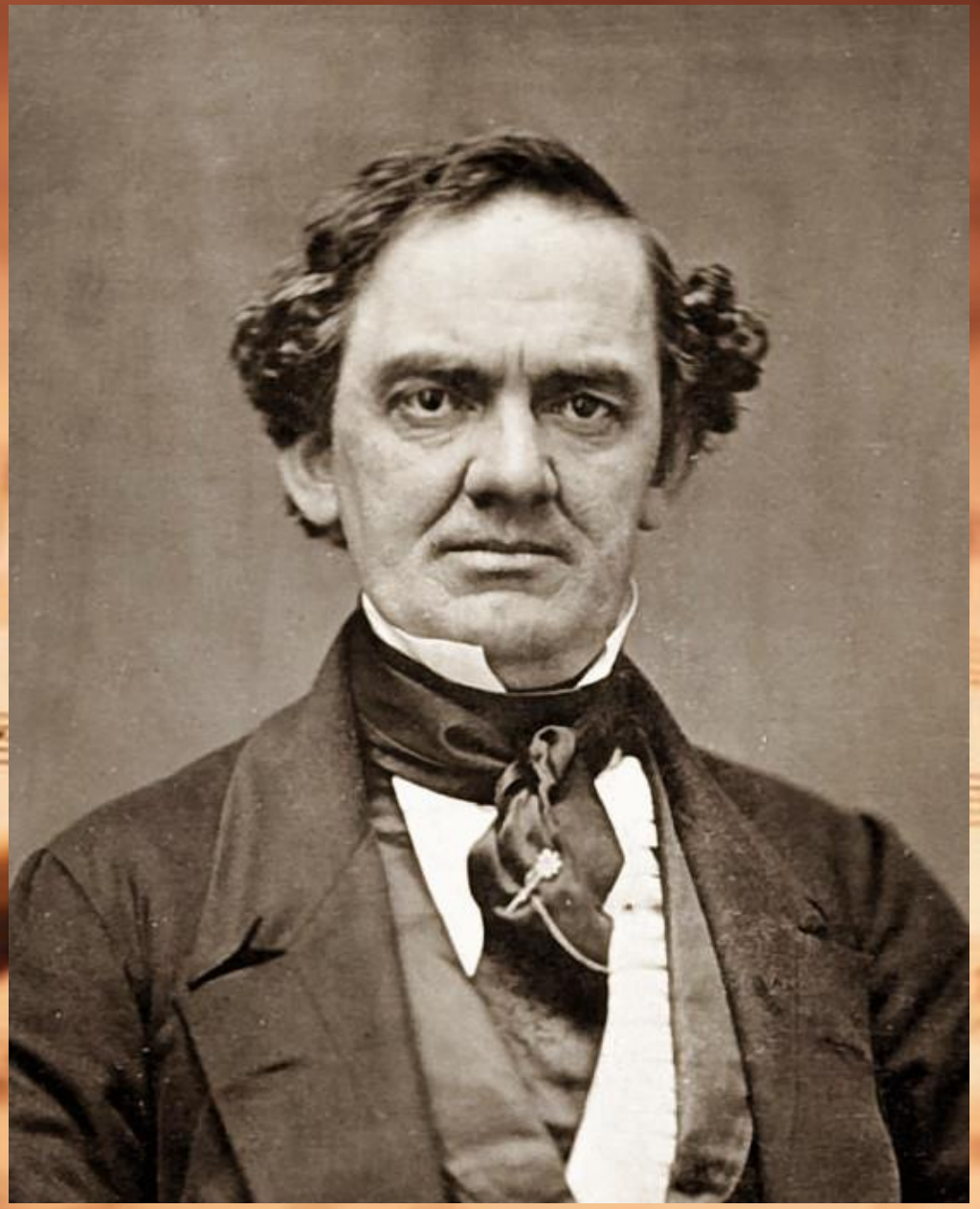
In 1849, Lind was approached by the American showman P. T. Barnum with a proposal to tour throughout the United States for more than a year. Realising that it would yield large sums for her favoured charities, particularly the endowment of free schools in her native Sweden, Lind agreed. Her financial demands were stringent, but Barnum met them, and in 1850, they reached agreement.

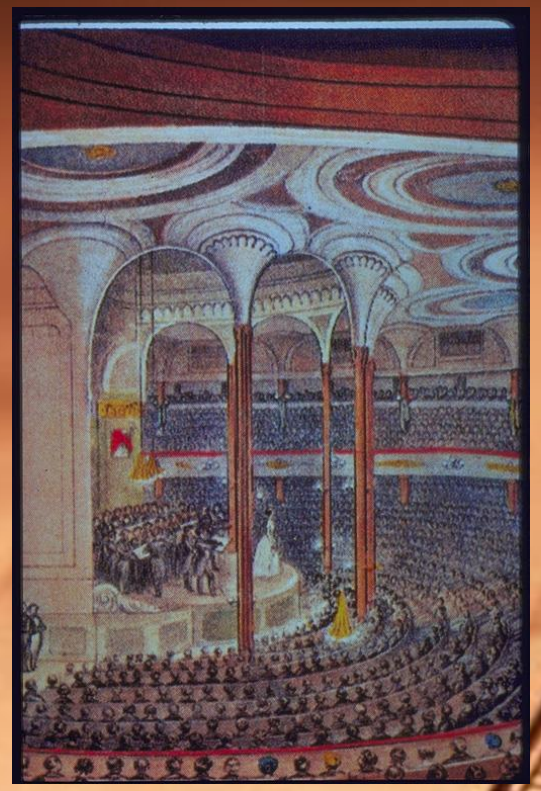
Together with a supporting baritone, Giovanni Belletti, and her London colleague, Julius Benedict, as pianist, arranger and conductor, Lind sailed to America in September 1850. Barnum's advance publicity made her a celebrity even before she arrived in the US, and she received a wild reception on arriving in New York. Tickets for some of her concerts were in such demand that Barnum sold them by auction. The enthusiasm of the public was so strong that the American press coined the term **"Lind mania"**



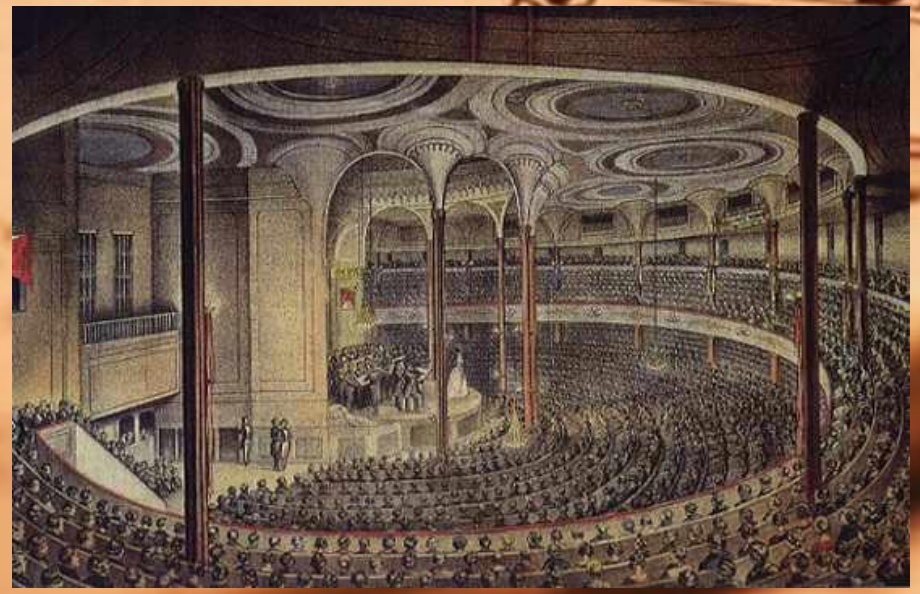
American tour

Phineas Taylor Barnum July 5, 1810 – April 7, 1891) was an American showman, politician, and businessman remembered for promoting celebrated hoaxes and for founding the Barnum & Bailey Circus (1871–2017). He was also an author, publisher, and philanthropist, though he said of himself: "I am a showman by profession ... and all the gilding shall make nothing else of me".





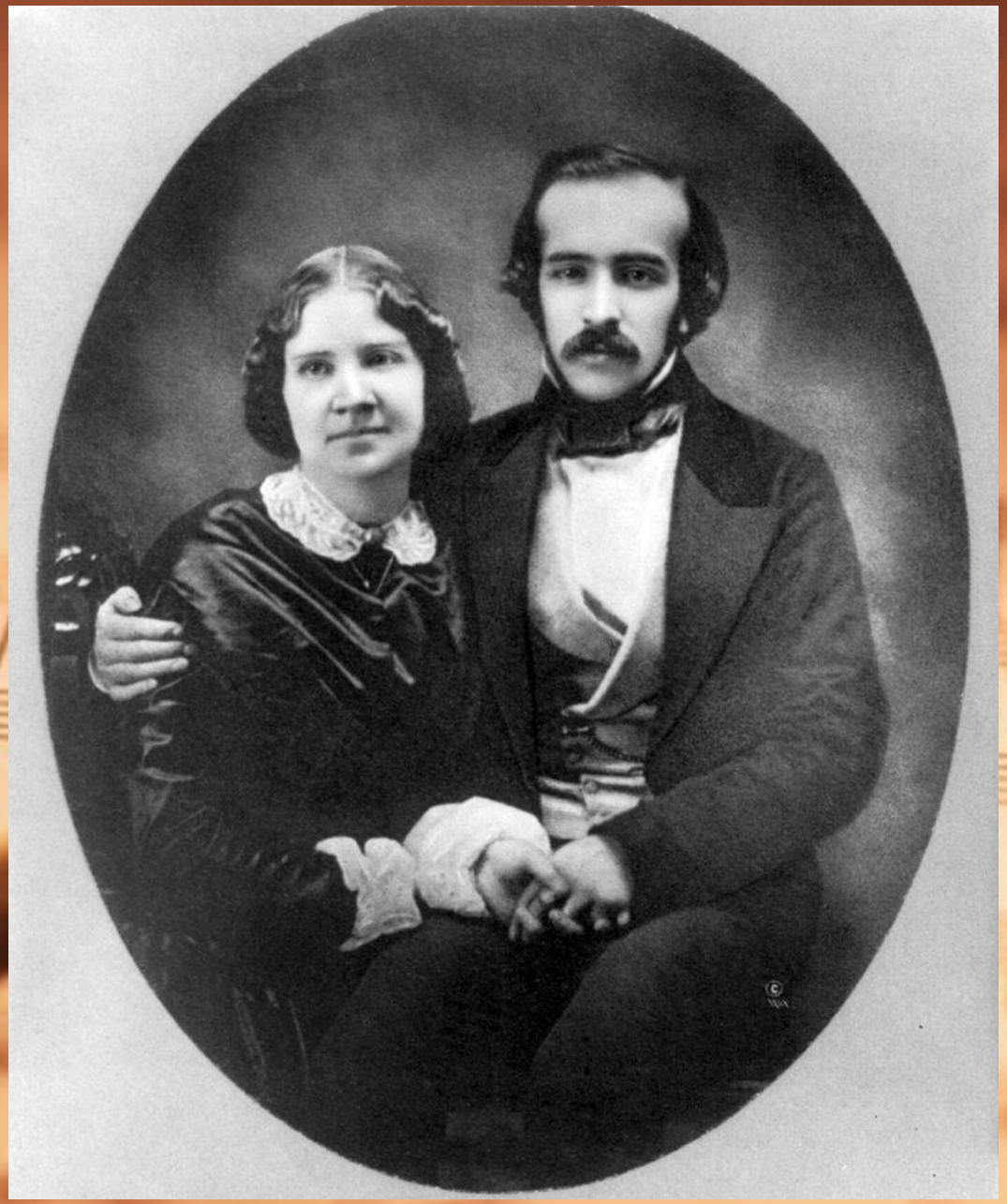
First appearance of Jenny Lind in the U.S. at **Castle Garden**, September 11, 1850 (engraving by Currier and Ives)



Castle Clinton or Fort Clinton, previously known as Castle Garden, is a circular sandstone fort now located in Battery Park, in Manhattan, New York City. Built from 1808 to 1811, it was the first U.S. immigration station (predating Ellis Island), where more than 8 million people arrived in the United States from 1855 to 1890.

After New York, Lind's party toured the east coast of **America**, with continued success, and later took in Cuba, the Southern US and Canada. By early **1851,** Lind had become uncomfortable with Barnum's relentless marketing of the tour, and she invoked a contractual right to sever her ties with him; they parted amicably. She continued the tour for nearly a year, under her own management, until May **1852**. Benedict left the party in **1851** to **return to England**, and Lind invited Otto Goldschmidt to replace him as pianist and conductor. **Lind and Goldschmidt were married** on 5 February **1852,** near the end of the tour, in Boston. She took the name "Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt", both privately and professionally.

Jenny Lind and her accompanist (later husband) Otto Goldschmidt



Jenny Lind private railroad car

The idea of a private railroad car came out of need. P. T. Barnum brought the well known soprano singer Jenny Lind to America from Sweden for a singing concert performance tour. He did much advance publicity even before she arrived in the United States, under the Nom des artes of the "Swedish Nightingale.

Details of the later concerts under her own management are scarce, but it is known that under Barnum's management Lind gave 93 concerts in America for which she earned about $350,000, and he netted at least $500,000 ($9.97 million and $14.2 million, as of 2015, respectively). She donated her profits to her chosen charities, including some US charities. The tour is a plot point in the 1980 musical Barnum and the 2017 film The Greatest Showman, both of which include a fictionalized adulterous relationship between Lind and Barnum with "romantic undertones"

Lind and Goldschmidt returned to Europe together in May 1852. They lived first in Dresden, Germany, and, from 1855, in England for the rest of their lives. They had three children: Otto, born September 1853 in Germany, Jenny, born March 1857 in England, and Ernest, born January 1861 in England.
Although she refused all requests to appear in opera after her return to Europe, Lind continued to perform in the concert hall. In 1856, at the invitation of the Philharmonic Society conducted by William Sterndale Bennett, she sang the chief soprano part in the first English performance of the cantata Paradise and the Peri by Robert Schumann. In 1866, she gave a concert with Arthur Sullivan at St James's Hall. The Times reported, "there is magic still in that voice... the most perfect singing – perfect alike in expression and in vocalization... Nothing more engaging, nothing more earnest, nothing more dramatic can be imagined

Later years

From 1879 until 1887, Lind worked with Frederick Niecks on his biography of Frédéric Chopin. In 1882, she was appointed professor of singing at the newly founded Royal College of Music. She believed in an all-round musical training for her pupils, insisting that, in addition to their vocal studies, they were instructed in solfège, piano, harmony, diction, deportment and at least one foreign language.

She lived her final years at Wynd's Point, Herefordshire, on the Malvern Hills near the British Camp. Her last public appearance was at a charity concert at Royal Malvern Spa in 1883. She died, at 67, at Wynd's Point on 2 November 1887 and was buried in the Great Malvern Cemetery to the music of Chopin's Funeral March. She bequeathed a considerable part of her wealth to help poor Protestant students in Sweden receive an education.

There are no recordings of Lind's voice. She is believed to have made an early phonograph recording for Thomas Edison, but in the words of the critic Philip L. Miller, "Even had the fabled Edison cylinder survived, it would have been too primitive, and she too long retired, to tell us much". The biographer Francis Rogers concludes that although Lind was much admired by Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn, the Schumanns, Berlioz and others, "In voice and in dramatic talent she was undoubtedly inferior to her predecessors, Malibran and Pasta, and to her contemporaries, Sontag and Grisi.

Lind is commemorated in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, London under the name "Jenny Lind-Goldschmidt". Among those present at the memorial's unveiling ceremony on 20 April 1894 were Goldschmidt, members of the Royal Family, Sullivan, Sir George Grove and representatives of some of the charities supported by Lind. There is also a plaque commemorating Lind in The Boltons, Kensington, London[28] and a blue plaque at 189 Old Brompton Road, London, SW7, which was erected in 1909.